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could the gradient of the nitrogen content with the interface between the films as boundary must be smaller than a certain value.--

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 2, 3 and 4 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Please amend the claims as follows:

Chen
ba 1. (Twice Amended) An information recording medium comprising a substrate on which at least a recording film which undergoes change in atomic arrangement upon irradiation with recording beams and a protective film comprising a dielectric are formed, said recording film and said protective film being formed in contact with each other, wherein

the protective film contains a sulfide and the nitrogen content in the protective film is not more than 25 at.%, the recording film contains Ge-Sb-Te based material and 0.1-10 at.% of at least one element selected from the group consisting of Si, P, V, Mn, Fe, Co, Ni, Cu, Zn, Nb, Mo, Ru, Rh, Pd, Ag, Cd, Sn, Ta, Os, Ir, Pt, Au, Tl, Pb, Bi and Cr, the element bonds to sulfur to produce sulfide or produces a barrier layer inhibiting diffusion of sulfur,

nitrogen contents on both sides of interface at which the recording film and the protective film contact with each other is such that the nitrogen content of the protective film side is greater than

that of the recording film side and the changing amount of the nitrogen content in the direction of thickness of the film with the interface between the films as a boundary is 1-50 at.%/nm.

Please add the following new claims:

--10. The information recording medium according to claim 1, wherein the protective film comprises ZnS-SiO_2 .--

--11. The information recording medium according to claim 1, wherein the protective film comprises $(\text{ZnS})_{80}(\text{SiO}_2)_{20}$.--

--12. The information recording medium according to claim 1, wherein the recording film comprises Ag-Ge-Sb-Te-N .--

--13. The information recording medium according to claim 1, wherein the recording film comprises $\text{Ag}_{2.5}\text{Ge}_{20}\text{Sb}_{22.5}\text{Te}_{55}$.--

--14. The information recording medium according to claim 1, which further comprises:

a first reflective layer over the protective layer; and
a second reflective layer over the first reflective layer.--

--15. The information recording medium according to claim 14, wherein the first reflective layer comprises $\text{Al}_{94}\text{Cr}_6$.--

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--16. The information recording medium according to claim 14,
wherein the second reflective layer comprises Al₉₉Ti₁.--

Sub
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B3
B4
Contd

--17. The information recording medium according to claim 1,
wherein the protective film is a first protective film, and the
information recording medium further comprises a second protective
film over the first protective film, and the first protective film is
thicker than the second protective film.--

--18. The information recording medium according to claim 1,
wherein the first protective film has a thickness of 90 nm.--

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--19. The information recording medium according to claim 1,
wherein the second protective film has a thickness of 15-18 nm.--

--20. The information recording medium according to claim 1,
wherein the recording film has a thickness of 14-16 nm.--

Attached hereto is a marked-up copy showing changes made by this
amendment.